3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

excellent protection from the winter blizzards that frequently sweep across the open plains, and horses could always forage on cottonwood bark.

Growing in the sandy soil along the larger streams were extensive thickets of plum bushes and grapevines; and in much of the eastern portion, pecans, walnuts, haws, and persimmons contributed to the food supply of the Comanches. The mesquite, the tree most commonly found, provided wood for fires and its beans were valuable food for both people and horses. The rocky hills and sides of canyons were covered with scrubby cedar. Other trees found here and there were the ash, elm, redbud, oak, willow, bois d'arc, hackberry, chinaberry, cottonwood, and chaparral.

During the hot, dry summers, the area appeared to be a desert, but shortly after a spring or summer rain, its wide expanse became a sea of nutritious grass. Its warm, salubrious climate, the abundance of edible plant products, and the millions of wild animals which provided food, clothing, and shelter made the area a paradise for nomads who lived by hunting. The Comanche was well off and rarely haunted by the spectre of starvation.

To the west were the Spanish and Pueblo settlements of New Mexico, within striking distance of a Comanche raiding party, or near enough for trade, but sufficiently removed to leave the raider safe from any punitive force that might attempt to pursue him through the adjacent mountainous terrain and across the wide, level expanse of the intervening *Llano Estacado*. The watering places and landmarks were so few as to make any expedition into the region extremely hazardous except for those thoroughly acquainted with the routes.

To the south lay a great expanse of wild waste in the Big Bend country; through this ran a network of Indian trails, by way of water holes, from the central homeland of the Comanches into northern Mexico. Beyond the Río Grande the settlements of northern Mexico were isolated and poorly defended. Striking across this wasteland, the Comanches raided settlements far south of the river, returning with many captives and thousands of horses. The great desert expanse prevented pursuit by forces sufficiently formidable either to punish the marauders or to recapture the plunder, and the Comanches prospered as plunderers.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

slough and at some distance from the arbor. Brooms made from the native broom weeds tied tightly to a stick handle, brush end down, were used to sweep the arbor and cooking area scrupulously clean; and there were surprisingly few flies around the arbor. Generally shade was available, and the eating was done under the trees, away from the arbor. Wood, of course, was the fuel for the campfire.

When the time came for the really bad weather of fall, tents were pitched. Some families still had tepee poles and canvas covering for them. The buffalo-hide coverings had been gone for a long time when I arrived on the scene. The tents and tepees, together with the house, supplied the shelter needed in truly bad weather.

I have been in and around camps many times, and on occasion have even found it necessary to stay for the night. I watched the division of labor, seeking to find a clue as to who bossed whom. I never arrived at any satisfactory answers. Apparently the husband kept hands off, and the cooking area may have been out of bounds for him. At least, he stayed clear until the call for food. I never saw any of the women seek advice from the husband while the preparation of the meal was in progress.

There were exceptions, but at the home camp the husband usually corralled the horses and roped the ones to be used. Generally one of the women would come and help him harness or saddle up. Apparently the same wife helped with the horses each time. I was never aware of an order being given. When a family was in camp on the reservation for its Grass Money, the husband ordinarily cared for the horses.

At the home camp, one or two of the squaws would take a team and the wagon into the woods for the camp's wood supply. The squaws selected the down timber and chopped it into small enough pieces so that they could load it on the wagon to be hauled to camp. In one family group, this task was permanently assigned to a wife who had been so indiscreet as to give birth to a white baby. (The displeasure was not, however, visited upon the child. Not only was it treated just the same as the other children, but at times I was inclined to think it was actually the husband's favorite.)

I never saw anything to indicate that the first or oldest wife was necessarily the favorite one, nor was I able to tell which one of the women established the division of labor. A more trained observer than I might have secured more accurate information. In any event, of these things I am sure: there was a division of labor, and each wife